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THE LESSONS OF
CUBA

By JAMES S. ALLEN

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JAMES S. ALLEN has long been active as journalist, editor, author and lecturer in the working-class movement. He is known particularly for his knowledge of world affairs and his studies of U.S. monopoly capitalism.

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THE LESSONS OF CUBA

By JAMES S. ALLEN

In the early hours of April 17, 1961, an emigre army invaded Cuba. It had been organized, trained and launched by the United States with the aim of overthrowing the revolutionary Cuban government. Within 72 hours of landing, the invading force of 1,300 to 1,500 men was completely routed, over 1,000 were taken prisoner by the army of the Cuban republic and people's militia.

We should be thankful to the Cuban people, to their government and armed forces under Fidel Castro for having so quickly and effectively put an end to this criminal venture. They did a service to the American people, by saving us from the consequences of a "victory" that would have been even more disastrous than the defeat. They gave us time to think, to act, and to change the policy before it brings further disgrace to the United States.

The venture was conceived under President Eisenhower and carried out by decision of President Kennedy. Now, on the pretext of national unity, both are attempting to clamp down on the storm of criticism which has arisen, and to shut off further revelations. Cries about the "clear and present danger of Communism" cannot conceal the real dangers confronting the nation. What is already known about the plot against Cuba has shocked the country and the world.

The truth is that on the beaches of Cuba on the dawn of April 17 we were at the brink of war. The invasion, schemed behind the backs of the people, had within it from the start the danger of growing into a world war.

Inside our own country we are witnessing also the other great danger. Interventionist and aggressive policies such as gave birth to the Cuban invasion encourage those elements and trends within the country which seek to destroy all democracy here and establish a garrison state.

These dangers must be seen and met, for they involve the destiny and security of the nation. The lessons of Cuba throw a penetrating light on what needs to be done.

Export of Counter-Revolution

The armed assault on Cuba was a deliberately planned effort by the Government of the United States to export counter-revolution. The total complicity of the Government is now universally admitted. It is one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the United States.

President Kennedy himself in his speech of April 20 defended the action, and in his press interview of April 22 assumed personal responsibility for the decision. Two weeks before the invasion, in the White Paper of April 3, the State Department sought to justify undeclared war against Cuba by rendering the "considered judgment of the Government" that the Castro regime "offers a clear and present danger" to the entire Hemisphere.

In a post-mortem review of "The Cuban Disaster," *Time* magazine (April 28) put it bluntly:

"The defeat, as all the world knows, was a tragedy not only for Cuba's exiles. It was a debacle for the U.S. as well. Through the offices of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon, the U.S. had done everything to assure success short of providing an air cover or sending in the Marines. The invaders—all Cubans—were trained by the U.S., supplied by the U.S., and dispatched by the U.S. to carry out a plan written by U.S. military experts. President Kennedy knew D-Day in advance, and had approved."

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The strategy of the intervention was probably worked out in the first part of 1960, with the approval of Eisenhower. An emigre striking force, trained and equipped by the United States, was to be given the mission of establishing a beachhead on Cuban soil. This was to be supplied and built up into what it pleased the plotters in Washington to call a "free territory." Out of the emigre groupings in the United States a sort of government-in-exile was to be formed, which would be transported to the "free territory." This done, the hand-picked government would be recognized by Washington, and rendered all possible support. Civil war was to be ignited, with the aim of obtaining some semblance of support within Cuba for the puppet regime.

Just how much U.S. armed involvement was planned, once the emigre junta was transported to the beachhead, has not been revealed. But such aid was implicit in the entire scheme—if it had worked.

Training of the Emigre Army

It cannot be said that the criminal plan failed for lack of preparation. Systematic training of the emigre army began at least as early as May, 1960, under the supervision of the CIA. From the press accounts, which began to appear in November, and took on the nature of a well-publicized venture on the eve of the invasion, it is possible to gather the essential details. From centers in Miami and New York, the recruits were sent for preliminary training or transit to camps in Florida, near New Orleans in Louisiana, and near Houston, Texas. Advance training of the invasion army was done in six, possibly seven, camps in Guatemala, manned by personnel of the U.S. military mission or by CIA experts.

To avoid direct departure of the invading army from territorial United States, staging bases were prepared at Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, and Swan Island, off the Honduras coast, where the CIA runs a radio station. In the weeks before the invasion, according to *Time*, the equivalent of 50 freight

carloads of munitions and arms were carried to Puerto Cabezas by unmarked U.S. cargo planes. During Easter Week, 27 U.S. Globemasters delivered supplies to the Guatemala camps. Six invasion ships were fitted out with guns and radar in New Orleans.

The army was supplied with Sherman tanks, M-3 light automatic carbines and other standard U.S. Army equipment. It had 15 U.S. B-26 bombers, one of which raided Havana on the eve of the invasion, and nine of which were shot down during the brief battle. U.S. Navy jets escorted the rebel bombers to within five miles off Cuba. C-47s parachuted a small force inland. Other U.S. troop carrier planes stood by in a Miami airport waiting to transport more troops. One plane was set aside for newspaper men. U.S. destroyers escorted the invasion fleet to within reach of the coast, while a U.S. aircraft carrier stood 30 miles offshore.

Despite the fiction that U.S. territory was not used, it is well known that for months raiding craft were leaving nightly from the Florida Keys, to engage in sabotage or deliver explosives to accomplices in Cuba. Aircraft on bombing or incendiary missions were known to have left Florida fields.

During the invasion itself, a participating B-26 bomber was reported to have landed at the Naval Air Station of Boca Chica, in Key West. Wounded evacuees from the Cuban beach were delivered in Navy planes to Camp Garcia, the U.S. Marine base on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, where they were held incommunicado. At this base, Cuban sailors had been trained for landing operations.

There was good reason to chose Guatemala as the training center. It was the model for the Cuban undertaking. The regime there is a product of a previous CIA counter-revolution, which overthrew a democratic government and restored the nationalized holdings of the United Fruit Co. Indicating what would be expected of a similar government in Havana, President Ygidoras of Guatemala permitted his country to be used by the United States in an effort to overthrow the revolutionary government of a brother republic.

The Council of National Betrayal

A few weeks before Eisenhower left office, he broke diplomatic relations with Cuba. This was but a preliminary to setting into motion the next step, the formation of an embryo Cuban government, thoroughly reliable from the imperialist viewpoint.

This was done under Kennedy. The so-called Cuban Revolutionary Council was finally put together on March 21, 1961, by the CIA and the State Department. Tad Szulc, the correspondent of the *N. Y. Times* who was in close contact with Cuban emigre circles in Miami, revealed later (April 9) that "it took powerful pressure from the United States" to constitute the Council from the many emigre factions.

As it was formed, so it lived—as an instrument of the CIA. During the invasion its members were kept virtual prisoners in an old house in Florida, not even told by the CIA that military operations had begun. CIA communiques were put out in the name of the Council. Kennedy had to send his experts—A. A. Berle, Jr., coordinator of Latin American policy and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., his political adviser—to pacify the Council, and finally to bring them to him at the White House for personal consolation.

In any case, the puppet government-in-embryo enjoyed virtual diplomatic recognition after its formation. Its members were received at the State Department by various U.S. officials, including Berle and Philip W. Bonsal, former Ambassador to Cuba. Two days later, on April 7, Jose Miro Cardona—head of the Council and President-Designate of the Havana government hopefully to be installed—announced "a general revolt" was imminent in Cuba. He explained that the Council would be expanded to form a provisional government in Cuba.

In the meantime, the emigre Council was treated like a duly recognized government authority, with official headquarters in a downtown New York hotel. It issued mobilization orders, gave interviews, and carried on official business.

The composition of the Council reveals the same chicanery which typifies the entire miserable undertaking. Miro Cardona, a wealthy Havana lawyer, was prime minister in the interim moderate Cabinet which followed the overthrow of Batista, but he soon resigned and deserted Cuba. Among his clients had been International Telephone & Telegraph, parent body of the communications monopoly in Cuba, now nationalized. Carlos Hevia, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, was assigned the post of foreign minister in the phantom cabinet. He had served as President of Cuba for a brief 48 hours in 1934, before Batista took over the government.

Most of the other five members of the Council are also conservative middle class elements, some of whom served in the first moderate post-Batista Cabinet. This latter circumstance is used to support the pretense that the United States wants to restore the original revolution, which they claim Castro "betrayed." But these elements, like others who deserted Cuba, are opposed to the basic accomplishments of the Cuban revolution, and wish to reverse it.

Actually, the most important member of the Council is Manuel Antonio de Varona, whose emigre group *Frente* (Revolutionary Democratic Front) was chosen by the CIA as its favored instrument. Even the counter-revolutionary emigres consider Varona far to the Right. He is an old-line politician, associated with the big cattle ranchers in Camaguey, who had served in non-Batista governments between 1947 and 1952.

Allen Dulles, whose family is associated with the highest U.S. monopoly circles, was not likely to pick men for a future Cuban government unless he knew they were safe for American big business. Manuel Ray, a more recent deserter from Cuba, was included in the Council in order to maintain a facade of unity. But he was rigorously excluded from the operation, because Dulles thought him still tainted by Castroism. Ray held that an effort should be made to arouse "popular" rebellion in Cuba, while Dulles and his emigre friends

were fearful of any playing around with mass movements. Varona spoke the language dear to the hearts of Dulles and his big money supporters. "The need for agrarian reform in Cuba is a myth," he held, favoring the return of all but the most unproductive land to the former owners.

The Real Invasion Aims

While the official State Department document on Cuba talked of the "Communist menace" and the need for an "autonomous" revolution, the program of the emigre Council blurted out the real purpose of the intervention. Its aims were declared in the call for civil war in Cuba, issued from the Council's New York headquarters on April 8. The Wall Street moguls whose properties had been nationalized in Cuba, were no doubt delighted with the program. The declaration bewailed the loss of the "free enterprise" system in Cuba. It wept over the redistribution of the national wealth, promising to set right the "injustices" of the land reform and the nationalization of industry, finance and housing. The land was to be taken from the cooperatives and returned to individual ownership. "Adjustments" would be made on nationalized big property. Private investment—both national and foreign—would be encouraged. And, of course, private enterprise would enjoy "complete guarantees."

If the counter-revolutionary government ever got installed, Cuba would be returned to the "democracy" of the Constitution of 1940, the Council promised. This would mean the cancellation of all the social legislation of the Castro government—the Agrarian Reform Law, the Urban Reform and the great educational, health and housing gains. It would mean, further, the return either to the outright tyranny of a Batista or at best a "moderate" government of old-line politicians like those on the Council. Most of all, as is obvious to all, a regime handpicked by Washington and imposed by force from the outside, would be a Government of National Betrayal.

Batista Men in Leadership

It is not surprising that a venture of this kind should bring forward the most reactionary elements, among the emigres as well as in the United States government. The undertaking was officially boosted as "anti-Castro, anti-Batista." Having been given the task of plotting a counter-revolution, Dulles found Batista people the most reliable for this dirty business.

So it was that the CIA maneuvered a coup in the Guatemala camps to bring the most trustworthy emigres into leadership. This meant Batista criminals, as well as the young ambitious Falangist, Manuel Artine, who was brought into the Council and named "Commander in Chief of the Army of Liberation." Emigre soldiers who opposed the coup were interned. Among the men captured by the Republican soldiers and militia in Cuba were quite a few Batista criminals, like Commander San Roman, one of two brothers in the invasion force, both of whom had been officers under Batista and had fought Castro in the hills. Another who turned up among the prisoners was Ramon Calvinio, who was accused of a long series of murders, beatings and tortures under Batista. He admitted working for Esteban Ventura, a Batista police chief, who is now living in Florida.

When these facts began to leak out from Havana, Tad Szulc in Miami confirmed it had been known for a long time that the emigre army camps contained many Batista supporters. Emigre spokesmen told Szulc that "on many occasions agents of the CIA in charge of the camps refused to expel Batista men on the ground that these soldiers and officers had military experience that was more important than their political background." (*N. Y. Times*, April 26.)

According to another account, a U.S. colonel in Guatemala wondered out loud what could be wrong with including Batista forces: "They're anti-Communist, aren't they?" So it was with the colonels in occupied Germany also, who saw nothing wrong with the Nazis; and now with colonels in many parts of the world where U.S. forces are helping to maintain

reactionary regimes in power. How soon will these colonels, nurtured in the "cloak and dagger" school of subversion and sabotage, lead a coup against the U.S. government itself, as their equivalents, trained in colonial wars, have tried in France a few times within recent years?

Where Did the Money Come From?

The CIA obviously had little difficulty rounding up the vast sums and supplies needed for the criminal enterprise. A lot of it came from the pockets of the American taxpayer. Dulles draws quite freely, and without any questions asked, from the huge government fund placed at the disposal of the CIA. The Pentagon has more than enough military goods. Other Federal funds came through the Cuban Emergency Refugee Center, a U.S. Government agency set up in Miami to support properly screened Cuban emigres at the rate of \$100 a month—a form of government subsidy to the families of the invasion army.

Private sources of finance were not lacking, either. Rich Cuban emigres, "anti-Batista" as well as Batistianos, had stowed away millions in U.S. banks. (That is the reason the U.S. government did not confiscate Cuban assets in the United States to recompense the monopolies for their nationalized properties.) Some escaped from Cuba with large government funds. Santiago Rabun, a rich Cuban industrialist, is reported to have bought an anti-submarine patrol boat from the U.S. Navy, large and fast enough to transport raiders. The core of the attacking force were sons of wealthy Cuban families. The list of prisoners, said officers of the Republican army and militia, read like the roll of the lily-white Havana Yacht Club—formerly, the hangout of the elite and now a people's resort.

Such people can get support from their friends in Latin America who want to preserve the old order. *Time* (April 28) revealed that a big Guatemala landowner, Roberto Alejos (whose brother is Ambassador to the United States), invited

the CIA to establish training camps on three of his plantations. No rent charged, it was noted—no doubt, a return favor for CIA help in restoring his landed property in 1954. But for a million dollars, Alejos prepared the airstrip at Retalhuleu, where the U.S. airlift delivered men and supplies, and took off with the invasion army. The same benefactor helped establish two more camps in Guatemala.

Financial Backing by Monopoly

In ventures of this kind, funds are also needed for special and private purposes, not available from the usual government sources. The powerful monopolies affected by the Cuban nationalization could supply such needs. Last January *Time* estimated that funds supplied from such private sources to Varona's *Frente* alone may have ranged from \$135,000 monthly to as high as \$500,000. Financial donations were accepted by Lem Jones Associates, a Madison Avenue public relations firm which handled publicity for the emigre Council—a fact announced as a service to potential donors by the *N. Y. Times* on April 19. The International Rescue Committee, set up by U.S. business interests to help counter-revolution anywhere, appealed on April 17, the day of invasion, for a \$250,000 emergency fund, over and above the million dollars already asked for Caribbean refugee aid.

The monopoly firms expropriated in Cuba are not small fry—the properties belonged to giants like Standard Oil, International Telephone and Telegraph, Electric Bond & Share, rubber and mining corporations, and the wealthy families and investment bankers who owned sugar and other estates. These and other U.S. big business interests are also deeply concerned about their vast holdings throughout Latin America, in the neighborhood of \$12 billion, representing somewhat less than one-third of their total foreign investment. These bring juicy returns, at a rate a number of times greater than their domestic investments. The major holdings are concentrated in a very small group of top monopolies, particularly in oil, mining and utilities.

Governor Rockefeller, whose family has a vast oil empire in Venezuela and other Latin countries, did not need much convincing to join in "national unity" with Kennedy in back of a policy to preserve the imperialist stake in Latin America. And the same is true for the inveterate defenders of the old imperialist and monopoly order to whom Kennedy appealed in his moment of need—like Herbert Hoover and General Douglas MacArthur.

The Anti-Communist Deception

Much else can be learned from the Cuban misadventure. A disaster of this scope, with the bitter revelations and mutual denunciations evoked by the fiasco, throws unaccustomed light upon the darkest recesses of government. So it is with the official arguments used to justify the effort to overthrow Castro. Government cannot come out and say that monopoly wants back its Cuban properties, or that it wants to save its holdings in the rest of Latin America from a similar fate. Sensible people everywhere would see that such objectives are not worth the risk of war. Therefore, hypocritical propaganda and deception are used to convince the people of the "justice" and "nobleness" of the American policy.

It is notable that not a word has been uttered by government spokesmen, nor has mention been made in the elaborate State Department document, about the billions of dollars of monopoly investment at stake. Instead, we have heard a great deal about democracy, autonomous revolution, reform and progress. Especially have we been told about the "Communist threat" to the Americas. Of course, no one in his right mind will believe that Cuba—with 6,000,000 people, half the population of the metropolitan area of New York City, a poor country—is or can be a threat to the United States.

The entire world also knows that it is the United States which has a base in Cuba—Guantanamo, seized at the beginning of this century for \$2,000, and maintained today against the will of the Cubans and in a country with which the United

States has broken diplomatic relations! This is an aggressive imperialist imposition if there ever was one.

Despite all efforts to create the opposite impression, neither the Soviet Union nor any other country has a military base in Cuba. In his letter of April 22 to President Kennedy, Premier Khrushchev stated plainly: "Our government does not seek any advantage or privilege in Cuba. We do not have any bases in Cuba, and we do not intend to establish any."

Since this is in fact the case, the official U.S. propaganda can speak of Cuba in terms only of a "bridgehead" of Communist conspiracy" or of an "alien ideology" for subverting by revolution all the countries of the Americas. A strange way to speak, considering that for many decades the imperialism of the North has been trying to impose upon Latin America ideas which the Latin American themselves consider alien to their independence and development. Strange also that Washington apologists for imperialism should expect people to forget that the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries have been protesting for years the establishment of U.S. military bases in countries along their border.

The Cuban Revolution

Certainly, a social revolution took place in Cuba, long overdue, and really "autonomous"—as native to Cuba as it could be. It began with a guerrilla war, organized by Fidel Castro and his colleagues from the mountains, with widespread popular support, for this was the only way the Batista tyranny could be overthrown. The United States had supported the bloody tyranny, practically up to the end, January 1, 1959, when it was overthrown. Batista's forces were trained by a U.S. military mission and they were supplied with arms from the United States. It was a notoriously corrupt regime. It murdered 20,000 Cubans to maintain power and to protect North American and Cuban business interests.

The product of a half century of domination by U.S. imperialism, the old Cuban government was a subservient tool

of the United States. No less an authority than Earl E. T. Smith, former Ambassador to Cuba, told the Senate Eastland Committee:

"Senator, let me explain to you that the United States, until the advent of Castro, was so overwhelmingly influential in Cuba that, as I said here a little while ago, the American Ambassador was the second most important man in Cuba; sometimes even more important than the President."

Only a social revolution within Cuba itself that would bring the people to power could change a situation where the U.S. Ambassador was more important than their President. This is what happened in Cuba. The revolution could not stop with superficial reforms, that would pacify the people at a low level of poverty, and without touching the root of the problem. That kind of "revolution" was desired by those who now accuse Castro of "betraying" the "middle class" revolution.

The main thing the U.S. monopolists, the State Department and the Cuban counter-revolutionists have against Castro is that he went too far.

According to them, he should have installed a moderate middle class government, that would have stemmed the revolution, instead of establishing a government devoted to the needs of the peasants and workers and seeking its support from them.

They hold it against Castro that instead of transforming the Rebel Army into a regular professional force for suppressing the people, he kept it close to the people, and supplemented it by the armed militia of workers, peasants and students. They flail Castro because he refused to impose upon a liberated labor movement leaders akin to George Meany and David Dubinsky, more concerned with fighting Communists than with advancing the interests of working people.

They would have had Castro carry out a skin-deep agrarian reform rather than the basic reform which changed the ancient

social structure of Cuba, and provided the peasantry for the first time with the possibility of a decent life, and the nation with the potential of industrial development.

They object to the Urban Reform, the revolution in education, health and housing which did away with many vested interests in order to improve the lot of the people.

Most of all, they hate Castro because in order to assure the economic as well as the political independence of his country he nationalized big U.S. and Cuban properties, thus redistributing the basic wealth in favor of the entire nation.

Defense of the Revolution

In a way, it can be said, the "radicalization" of the revolution is due more to the hostile actions against Cuba by the United States than to the influence of the Soviet Union and China. It is noteworthy that the wholesale nationalization of U.S. monopoly property did not take place until August 1960—a year and one half after the establishment of the Castro regime. It was a retaliatory and defensive measure made necessary by the economic warfare waged by the U.S. Government and monopoly against Cuba. The nationalization of the Cuban-owned big property took place shortly thereafter—also in defense against the growing counter-revolutionary activity of this group, encouraged from the United States.

The transition within Cuba toward a socialist-type society, which would come in any case as the revolution developed, might have occurred in easier and slower stages without the active interference of the United States.

Similarly, it was in order to avoid economic strangulation by the United States that Cuba turned to the Socialist countries for aid. During the first year of the Castro government, the United States turned down Cuban requests for economic and financial help. It also began actively to place obstacles in the way of Cuban-U.S. trade, which had accounted for over two-thirds of Cuba's foreign commerce. It was not until February 1960, that a trade agreement was negotiated with the

Soviet Union, including provisions for the purchase of Soviet oil, at a price below that of the world oil cartel.

When in the following June Standard Oil (Jersey), Texaco and Shell—in the interest of their world oil cartel—refused to handle the first imports of Soviet oil, the Cuban government took over the management of ("intervened") their refineries. When these monopolies cut off oil from Venezuela, Cuba took steps to purchase practically all its oil from the Soviet Union.

The big blow in Washington's economic war against the Cuban revolution came in July when Cuba's sugar quota was cancelled. This was expected to bring Cuba to her knees, since the American market accounted for a decisive portion of the island's sugar crop.

Furthermore, the quota system had served as the base for tying the Cuban economy as a whole to the United States. Over two-thirds of Cuba's foreign trade was carried on with this country, to the disadvantage of the Cuban people who had to pay high prices for imported foods and other consumer's needs as a result of preferential tariffs enjoyed by U.S. exporters. The abrupt cancellation of the quota was thus intended to cripple the Cuban economy as a whole.

Here, again, the Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries agreed to take the sugar kept out of the U.S. market. And from this followed other trade agreements and credits, providing Cuba with much-needed machinery, factories and other goods.

Nationalization of Monopolies

On August 6, in defense of its revolution, Cuba nationalized the biggest U.S. corporations. These included, besides the oil refineries, the electric power and telephone companies, and the sugar mills. Cuba took over American & Foreign Power, the subsidiary of one of the biggest utility monopolies in the United States. It controlled 90 per cent of Cuban electricity, as well as water and other public service enterprises. The telephone company, which monopolized communication

in Cuba, is a subsidiary of International Telephone & Telegraph, tied in with the top circles of Wall Street finance capital.

The U.S.-owned sugar mills were among the biggest in Cuba, accounting for 40 per cent of production. Some of the wealthiest families in the United States, with big banking and other business interests, owned these mills.

Nationalization of the other major U.S. interests in Cuba was completed in September and October, when it was apparent that the United States was preparing some form of armed intervention. First it was the turn of the rubber companies and the Minimax chain of grocery stores, then the branches of the U.S. banks and finally, when Washington imposed an embargo on exports to Cuba in October, the nationalization of 166 U.S.-owned companies. All told, about one billion dollars in U.S. investment was taken over.

As it became clear that U.S. interventionist policy was receiving support from Cuban business elements, steps were taken against them also. In September and October, the nationalization of the cigar and cigarette companies and some 400 Cuban businesses practically eliminated from the economy what there was of big Cuban private enterprise.

The Agrarian Reform had expropriated no more than 3,000 big landowners, and the Urban Reform affected a few thousand landlords, many of them emigres. That portion of the Cuban upper middle class which had been dependent upon the sugar and other trade with the United States, including tourism, gambling and prostitution, was hard hit by the U.S. economic warfare against Cuba. Probably, the middle class in Cuba suffered more from the Washington actions than from the nationalizations of the Cuban government.

Thus the steps undertaken in defense of the revolution against U.S. imperialist hostility propelled the revolution forward. Measures intended to strangle the revolution and bring Cuba back into the imperialist fold, had the opposite effect. The development of the revolution, its deepen-

ing and extension, was laying the basis for its transition to socialism. The main problem of Cuba—to defend its independence against imperialism—required the growth and consolidation of popular support: in the first place, the active support of the workers and peasants, who benefited most from the revolution and who needed its further development as a guarantee of their gains.

Fortunately for them—and also for the people of the United States and the entire Western Hemisphere—they were able to obtain from the Socialist countries the goods and arms that the U.S. government and monopolies denied them.

After the defeat of the invasion, Castro spoke of the revolution as patriotic, democratic *and socialist*. He was thus proclaiming the fact that the great tempo of the revolution had brought Cuba to a new stage. It is the stage in which the goal of building socialist society becomes the national aim. Blas Roca, leader of the Cuban Communists (Popular Socialist Party), in his statement on the great Cuban victory, joined with Castro and the July 26th Movement in hailing the transition of the revolution to the socialist stage. Thus, amidst the great elan of the people and with the firm unity of all leading forces of the revolution, Cuba is the first country in the Western Hemisphere to embark on the socialist road.

Why the Invasion Failed

To know why the invasion failed is also to understand why the continuation of the same policy which gave birth to it will lead to even greater dangers for world peace and for democracy at home. The basic causes for the fiasco are not to be found in the miscalculations and the bungling of the CIA, the Pentagon and the other agencies involved. Such miscalculations and mistakes are bound to occur when the fundamental approach fails to assess realistically the situation in Cuba, in Latin America, and in the world as a whole.

The misadventure in Cuba throws a glaring light upon what is wrong with the entire foreign policy of the United States.

The first reality that the plotters in Washington failed utterly to grasp is the strength of the Cuban Revolution. Only a revolution that is authentic in the real sense of the word, that is made by and belongs to the people, can call forth such complete support and heroism as shown by the Cuban people.

An "imported revolution," a "bridgehead" operation, a conspiratorial putsch—as the interventionist wiseacres try to make the Cuban revolution appear—could be defeated easily. It was therefore the counter-revolution exported from Washington, aimed at re-establishing the imperialist bridgehead with the help of a conspiratorial putsch from the inside, that met instantaneous and utter defeat. To the imperialists and monopolists, to the dispossessed rich Cuban emigres, Castro was the " betrayer." To the Cuban people, Fidel is the national hero, completely identified with their liberating and uplifting revolution.

Crisis in Latin America

Second, the invasion failed because the Cuban revolution is seen by the poverty-stricken and repressed millions of Latin America as their forward position against Yankee imperialism, and as the pioneer of their own long-overdue revolutions.

During the months in which the invasion was being prepared, it was already obvious that intervention would be met by a storm of protest, engulfing even elements and governments considered friendly to Washington. On March 5-8, 1961, all Latin countries were represented in Mexico City at the Conference on National Sovereignty, Economic Emancipation and Peace, which expressed clear-cut popular support for Castro.

Because of the widespread popular support for the Cuban revolution, previous efforts of the United States to form an

interventionist united front in the Organization of American States proved futile. And on the eve of the invasion, government circles in practically every Latin American capital expressed great concern lest intervention lead to serious internal crises.

A summary of government opinion in these countries appeared in the *New York Times* of April 16 (a day before the invasion), under the head: "Reports from South and Central America Indicate The Fears That Arise Over Direct Intervention." As a leading Latin American diplomat had put it a few weeks before, "Our public opinion cannot accept another Guatemala." Even from Guatemala City, where a CIA regime ruled, came news of "repugnance toward anything that might be interpreted as intervention by the United States." On April 14, President Quadros of Brazil, although critical of Castro, praised the idealism and gains of the Cuban revolution, supported Cuba's right to self-determination, and urged re-establishment of normal relations between Cuba and the United States.

When the actual intervention occurred, the popular indignation that burst forth made it doubly clear that no government could come to the aid of the U.S.-backed intervention if it hoped to survive. The contempt that greeted Vice President Nixon barely two years before was nothing compared with what now took place. U.S. Embassies and offices in the major cities were stoned; offices of U.S. corporations, like United Fruit and Pan American Airways, were attacked. Shaky and nervous governments brought out soldiers and police to break up mass demonstrations of thousands. Militias to support Cuba sprung up; former president Cardenas of Mexico offered his services to the Cuban government.

What could be expected if the United States were to undertake further military action against Cuba can be seen from the giant demonstrations that occurred after Kennedy's speech of April 20. In that speech the President threatened that the United States would itself undertake

military action against Cuba if Latin American governments failed to make a joint effort. In Mexico City 15,000 marched in protest, in Montevideo over 8,000 and similarly in other cities. Speakers "both right and left," according to the account of the Montevideo meeting, denounced Kennedy as "the worst imperialist in fifty years." The Brazilian government called for a UN investigation of the invasion.

The spontaneous revulsion in Latin America shows that new efforts to overthrow the revolutionary government of Cuba, by whatever means, might isolate the United States from its own so-called inter-American system. No important Latin American government would dare support it. Post-mortem surveys of opinion in government circles showed clearly that the key governments—Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile—are even less prone to come along with current suggestions from Washington for a political and economic embargo on Cuba than they were when similar proposals were made before the invasion. Imperialist pressure for this purpose is more likely to have the same effect as the hostile campaign against Cuba—to stimulate and speed up the anti-imperialist, democratic revolutions throughout Latin America.

Role of World Anti-Imperialism

The third reality of the present-day world that Washington failed to realize is the fact that national liberation revolutions can no longer be stemmed or contained. The effort to do so in Cuba immediately evoked from the entire anti-imperialist and neutralist world the sharpest condemnation. When President Nkruma of Ghana cabled Fidel Castro his congratulations on crushing the invasion, he voiced general solidarity with the Cuban revolution among the new nations of Asia and Africa and the peoples still engaged in the fight against colonialism. As the debates in the United Nations demonstrated, this feeling ranges from the most radical to the moderate and even conservative governments—like Egypt, Morocco, India or Saudi Arabia.

In most nations aligned with the United States in military pacts the invasion was either condemned as outright imperialism or, in less radical circles, as inexcusable bungling by a power that claims to lead the "free world." The London *Observer* noted that Kennedy's government does not have "any conception of how its Cuban policy appears to the rest of the world." Caustic comments about how the "Kennedy image" looks now, and about the "loss of prestige" of the United States appeared practically everywhere.

At no time since the start of the cold war was the United States so isolated in world councils. At the United Nations, diplomats of the closest imperialist allies of the United States—whose governments had also been burned by similar "miscalculations"—sat silent for the most part as spokesmen for the Socialist and anti-imperialist world condemned the United States in language that had not been heard since Castro made his denunciation in the General Assembly.

The effort of the United States to have the Cuban question transferred from the UN to what it considered its own precinct in the Organization of American States was defeated. The colonial powers and a few submissive states prevented outright condemnation of the United States by the Assembly. But according to Thomas J. Hamilton (*N. Y. Times*, April 23), it would be impossible to avert condemnation in the UN should the United States try another aggression against Cuba.

Role of the Socialist World

Before the invasion Kennedy had stated there would be no direct armed intervention in Cuba by the United States. This was in part a speculation, in part a deception. The deception rested in the fact that U.S.-backed armed intervention by the emigre army was actually in the final stages of preparation.

On the other hand, the statement seemed to reflect recognition of the fact that the Soviet Union was committed

to defense of Cuba in case of aggression against her. It was another kind of brinkmanship, based on the hope that the Socialist world would do nothing pending direct U.S. military involvement. (It was a fiction that the Cuban air force had Soviet Migs at that time. In addition to 12 B-26 bombers and 5 British Sea Fury propeller fighters, it had only three U.S.-built T-33 jet-fighter trainers, which were mistaken for Migs.)

The speculation collapsed on the second day of the invasion. Premier Khrushchev informed President Kennedy that the invasion was a danger to world peace, called upon him to halt the aggression, and affirmed the intention of the Soviet Union to "render the Cuban people and their government all necessary assistance in beating back the armed attack on Cuba." The official Soviet Government statement issued at the same time ended with this paragraph:

"The Soviet Government reserves the right, if armed intervention in the affairs of the Cuban people is not cut short, to take, together with other countries, all steps to render the necessary aid to the Republic of Cuba."

Kennedy's reply that Soviet military involvement would bring direct U.S. intervention was entirely beside the mark. It was the United States that had organized the emigre invasion, with the implicit threat of direct U.S. military involvement, in violation of the Charter of the O.A.S. which specifically illegalizes such actions.

Nor was Kennedy answering to the point when he replied to Khrushchev that "the United States intends no military intervention in Cuba." The Soviet Union, supported by China and other socialist countries, was saying that it would render necessary assistance to Cuba against the intervention already in progress. If there was any intention on the part of the Kennedy Administration to rush support by air and sea in an effort to rescue the emigre army and continue the aggression, Khrushchev's warning certainly was a weighty argument against such action.

The Soviet Union thus brought immediately into play the central reality of the present-day world—the strength of the global peace forces, in which the Socialist world plays the leading role. There can be no question but that the entire anti-imperialist world of Asia, Africa and Latin America would have rallied to the defense of the Cuban revolution, alongside the Socialist nations.

Under these circumstances it is doubtful that any important NATO ally would come to the support of the United States. Rockets would hardly have been necessary in such a situation. Practically isolated, United States intervention would have suffered the same fate as the aggression of Britain and France against Egypt after the nationalization of the Suez Canal.

Subsequent statements by Administration spokesmen, like that of Secretary of State Dean Rusk on May 1, to the effect that the United States is contemplating neither support to another emigre invasion nor direct military attack with its own forces, seem to reflect some appreciation of the actual state of affairs.

World Peace Involved

Thus, the sobering lessons to be learned from the Cuban fiasco go much beyond Cuba itself, to the heart of the question of war and peace.

It has been true for some years that any policy directed toward containing, rolling back or reversing the vast national liberation movement of our time cannot succeed. This has been demonstrated in Asia, the Middle East and in Africa. It is now shown by Cuba that this is just as true in the Western Hemisphere. Imperialism is on the way out everywhere. And this is true for all imperialism—for the American brand which cloaks monopoly domination of other countries with democratic and anti-colonial pretenses, as well as for the colonial type, like the British, French, Dutch or Portuguese. It is therefore impossible to carry on as if imperialism

still dominates the world and has a future, without suffering one fiasco after another.

The threat of the United States, expressed in Kennedy's speech of April 20, to invoke the Monroe Doctrine would bring even greater disasters if carried out. In this age of dying colonialism, the United States cannot expect to turn the O.A.S. into its colonial office, unless it is ready to use force to impose tyrannical Batista-type governments on Latin America. The fiasco in Cuba shows that this line of action will have the opposite effect—the stimulation and speeding up of the Cuba-type revolutions throughout Latin America.

Hemisphere Peaceful Coexistence

We have to face what is generally misnamed the extension of the "cold war" to Latin America, but which is in reality the appearance in the Western Hemisphere itself of the historic competition between capitalism and socialism. It is not a question of "abandoning Cuba to the Communists," as the President says, or of "containing" communism within Cuba.

It means in the first place, the imperative need to respect fully the sovereignty and self-determination of all countries in South and Central America, their right to governments of their own choice, even if they are socialist or if they include Communists.

It means that we must stop any effort at intervention, whether through emigre councils and sabotage raids organized by the CIA, or by economic or military warfare. Peaceful coexistence means we must abolish outfits like the CIA, and end all subversive efforts at exported counter-revolution. It means we must restore normal relations with Cuba by negotiations, as the Castro government proposed, after it had crushed the invasion as well as before then. We need a policy of peaceful coexistence with nations in our own hemisphere, if we are to have peaceful coexistence throughout the world.

One of the most important lessons to be learned from Cuba is that the peoples of Latin America will not be satisfied with "authentic and autonomous" revolutions made in Washington. Latin American liberals who ordinarily defend Washington's misconception of democracy—like Dr. Jose Figueras, former President of Costa Rica—were shocked by the intervention and warned that it would turn all Latin America against the United States. The "Alliance for Progress" economic aid will be seen clearly as the kind of "charity that corrupts" as long as it is tied to imperialist intervention.

For in the Cuban invasion it became obvious that no revolution, no matter how native or indigenous, would be acceptable to Washington if it led to independence from imperialism and monopoly. The intervention in Cuba confounds the advocates of "revolution" within the confines of imperialism with a question they are unable to answer. How can any social revolution worthy of that designation possibly develop in Latin America without eliminating the twin evils of local feudalism and Yankee monopoly domination?

The Crisis at Home

In the aftermath of the invasion fiasco, the danger to democracy within the country has been accentuated. This was shown by a number of developments, which place in clear focus the relation between the struggle for democracy at home and the fight for peace.

Kennedy himself displayed a dangerous tendency to succumb to the pressures from reaction and to move towards the Right. In his appeals for national unity he had a demonstrative series of meetings with Republican leaders most clearly identified with the Right Wing and with a warlike line.

After Richard Nixon and Governor Nelson Rockefeller got through talking with Kennedy, both made belligerent statements about the need for stopping Communism in the Hemisphere, even if it were to mean further military action

against Cuba. Senator Goldwater, who had called for naval blockade and outright war against Cuba and is the advocate of world war, was one of those favored by the President in his series of "unity" talks. Finally, after his conversation with Kennedy, General Eisenhower called upon the Republicans for a moratorium on criticism of the Administration and for support to the Kennedy foreign policies.

In the midst of this series of meetings, Kennedy made his appeal to the editors for self-censorship. "No war," he said, "ever posed a greater threat to our security" than the "Communist menace" in Cuba and in the rest of the world. And further: "The danger has never been more clear and its presence has never been more imminent."

This sounded like the preliminary to a declaration of war. The *New York Post*, reflecting the shock among the ADA and other liberals associated with the Democratic Party, wrote editorially: "Such language usually foreshadows the suspension of basic liberties." While still hoping that Kennedy does not mean what he says, the *Post* warned: "Yet the surface impact and logic of his words is to encourage those who would create such a climate here."

Kennedy's are rather drastic statements if all he wanted was to hold off the gathering partisan attack upon the Administration, as some suggest. If that is so, Kennedy displayed a shocking lack of responsibility to the American people in face of the menace from the Right and from the warmongers. That something more than partisan defense is involved is shown by other actions of the President.

"Limited Wars"

Kennedy now returned with new emphasis to his advocacy of "limited" wars, "paramilitary" forces, and guerrilla and mobile detachments to fight revolutions. He had raised this strongly in his Defense Message at the end of March. To the committee appointed to investigate the CIA and related agencies, Kennedy now added General Taylor, an advocate

of similar views, and Admiral Burke who had only recently been rebuked by Kennedy for his open attacks upon the Soviet Union. It can be expected that Taylor and his committee will recommend the merging and reorganization of such operations into a main branch of warfare under the Pentagon, to be used particularly against the national liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and elsewhere.

The effect of such measures would be to prepare the kind of undeclared war that was launched against Cuba. Remember, it was prepared in secret and without the debate or sanction of Congress, and passed on from one President to the next behind the closed doors of the Executive Department. Such pernicious evasion and undermining of the Constitution would thus be built into a system of intervention on a dozen fronts, any one of which could blaze into a nuclear catastrophe.

After twenty years in which the military forces and the defense establishment have flourished during world war, colonial wars and cold war, the military brass have come to play an important role in the country. In this period, they have also become integrated with Big Business, especially in procurement, stockpiling and in the many operations required to maintain a modern military establishment.

To this combination, dangerous enough in itself, we must add the potential mass fascist organization which is forming in the country under the auspices of the Birch Society and other similar groupings.

The perilous trends that come sharply forward after the disaster in Cuba also showed signs of affecting the Kennedy position on domestic economic questions. In his Defense Message, the President had already requested an increase of two billion dollars over the budget recommended by Eisenhower. Kennedy also indicates that after a re-examination of military requirements, he may ask for more.

With the mounting talk about "clear and present danger" and the need for more sacrifice the danger arises that the really clear and pressing problem of unemployment will get

little attention, not to speak of the expanded social services promised in the election platform. In a barnstorming tour of the country, Nixon opposed even the minimum social legislation of the Kennedy Administration, and showed himself as a contender with Senator Goldwater for the leadership of a Right Wing Republican Party. These and others are trying to force Kennedy to the brink of war and into a garrison state. Thus the failure of Kennedy to break from the inherited cold war policy provided an opening to the Right, which resurgent reactionary and warlike forces are now trying to exploit.

What to Do?

The opening to the Right has to be closed, and the long overdue turn toward peace and democracy has to be made. This is the central question confronting all the progressive and peace forces in the land. The great majority of the people are apprehensive lest even "limited" military involvement—as in Cuba—lead to a nuclear holocaust. Demonstrations in many cities against the Cuban invasion show it, as do the mounting actions and meetings for peace. Campuses sprang to life in the Cuban crisis. For a Schlesinger or two who prostitute themselves in the service of imperialism, there are numerous eminent scholars, professors, writers and public men who now speak out clearly in our great tradition of anti-imperialism.

The labor movement is stirring with opposition to the cold war policies of George Meany and others like him. The youth lead many demonstrations for peace. The Negro people have a deep resentment against a policy which seeks to suppress national liberation movements which, as in Cuba and Africa, establish freedom and equality for people of their race. The Negro press reflected this sharply in the Cuban crisis, as did leading Negro citizens in their public pronouncements.

Here are the elements, currents and tendencies amidst

the labor movement, among the Negro people and the youth, and in the peace movement which in further development can offset the perilous pressure from the Right. By finding the way to a common approach and to united action these forces can save the country from the disastrous cold war policy and force upon the Administration a change in course.

What Kennedy failed to do in his first 100 days, he must now be impelled to do. An end of all interventionist policies and plans is needed to ease world tensions. Non-intervention in internal affairs of other countries must become a first principle of foreign affairs. We must proceed toward mutual disarmament—conventional as well as nuclear—and to the settlement of all questions by negotiations. As Premier Khrushchev proposed in his second letter to President Kennedy on Cuba, a broad understanding should be reached between the United States and the Soviet Union that neither "would engage in saber-rattling or push their military or economic superiority to the forefront." An established national policy of peaceful coexistence is the only policy that can prove successful in the present-day world.